

Ephesians 1 Prayer for us

Glorious Father, God of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Please give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation

so that we may know you better.

May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened so that we may know

the hope to which you have called us,

the riches of your inheritance for us,

and the immeasurable greatness of the power

you worked in raising and exalting Jesus

and now work in us.

To the praise of your glory, Amen.

Ephesians 3 Prayer for us

Our Heavenly Father, out of your glorious riches,

would you strengthen us with power through your Spirit

that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.

May we be rooted and grounded in love,

and may we have power to grasp

how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is.

May we know this love that surpasses knowledge –

filled with all the fullness of God.

To you, Oh God, be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus

throughout all generations, for ever and ever, Amen.

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Study 1: Overview

The book of Ephesians is a letter written by _____, to the church in _____. (Eph 1:1-2)

In your group, read the whole book of Ephesians. As you read note down:

- ❖ Any themes you notice (words or phrases that are repeated often)
- ❖ Any reasons given for writing
- ❖ Any verses you don't understand
- ❖ Any verses that stand out to you
- ❖ Any questions you want answered

Discuss the following questions.

1. Did you notice an overall structure to the book? What are chapters 1-3 mostly about? What are chapters 4-6 mostly about?
2. What reasons did you find for why Paul wrote the letter?
3. What themes did you notice? Any words or phrases that are repeated often?
4. From this first reading of Ephesians, is there anything God is challenging you about or encouraging you with?

Through the week...

To find out more about Paul's relationship with the Ephesian church, read Acts chapters 19 and 20. Notice how Paul describes his ministry among them.

Study 2: Our blessings in Christ

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

1. How does Paul describe himself in verse 1?
2. How does Paul describe the Christians in Ephesus?
3. In verses 3-8 Paul praises God for all he has done for the believers. Carefully work through the verses listing all the things God has done.

Verse 3: B _____ (*with what? where?*)

Verse 4: C _____ (*when? for what?*)

Verse 5: P _____ us to be A _____

Verse 6: Freely given us his G _____ (*in whom?*)

Verse 7: R _____ (*how?*)

F _____

Verse 8: L _____ on us his G _____

4. What are we told of God's motivations?

5. Verses 9 & 10 tell us the mystery of God's will has been revealed. What is it?

6. What are we told about God in verse 11?

7. How did the Ephesians come to be included in Christ?

8. What are we told about the Holy Spirit in verses 13 & 14?

Making it personal...

1. Can you imagine someone writing to us as "the saints who are in _____ and are faithful in Christ Jesus"? Why / why not?

2. Of all the things we've been told in this passage that God has done for us, which is the most precious to you today?

3. Can you think of a time when knowing God "works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (v 11) has been a great comfort?

4. Have you heard the gospel of salvation and believed? If so, thank God that he has included you in Christ and sealed you with his Spirit!

Through the week...

This passage teaches that you were chosen by God before the creation of the world. Does this challenge your thinking about your choosing of Jesus? Spend time dwelling on this truth of predestination. See also Colossians 1:3-23.

Study 3: Powerful Prayer

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

1. What has Paul heard about the Ephesian church? Do these always go together?
2. What does Paul do in response to what he's heard? Why?
3. Look in detail at Paul's prayer (verses 17-19). What does he ask God for? Find 5 things! (*Hint: look for the words "may" and "that".*)
4. When was God's power / might displayed in Jesus?

5. What are we told about Jesus here?

6. How is the church described?

Making it personal...

1. As a church community, do we have a reputation for faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints? How could we do better?
2. When you pray for someone, do you tell them? Do you tell them what you pray? Would you be encouraged to know what people are praying for you?
3. How do your prayers measure up to Paul's? Do you have the same priorities?
4. How often do you pray for a church?
5. In what circumstances could this description of the power of Jesus be a comfort to you?

Through the week...

Make Paul's prayer your own this week as you pray for a community of God's people.

Meditate on the power of God in Christ. See also Colossians 1:15-20.

Study 4: Before and After

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

1. Paul contrasts what the Ephesians were with what they now are with Christ.

Fill in the chart below from verses 1-6

BEFORE	AFTER

2. Who brings about the change?

3. How does the change take place?

4. Why does God change us? (See verses 4, 5 & 7)

5. Fill in the boxes to summarise verses 8-10

	by		through		for	
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6. What is the place of works in salvation?

Making it personal...

1. What are some of the things we might feel we need to do to be saved?
2. This passage teaches we cannot contribute anything to our salvation. How does that make you feel?
3. Read verse 10 again with your name in place of the “we”. Is this how you picture yourself? What would change if you took this to heart?
4. What good works might God have prepared for you this week?

Through the week...

Be alert to the times your approach to God is affected by your performance.

Consider the freedom we have knowing that our standing before him is secure in

Christ. See also Hebrews 4: 14-16.

Study 5: One in Christ

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

1. Use the table below to note down the ways Paul describes the Jews and the Gentiles in verses 11 & 12.

JEWS	GENTILES

2. Find at least 4 things Paul says Jesus accomplished by his death.

(Hint: look for the words blood, flesh & cross.)

3. Who is now at peace? Why did they need to be reconciled?

4. What is our new status?

5. With a play on words, Paul turns from household (v19) to house (v20).

Consider the building described in verses 20-22. Who is the builder? What place does Christ have? What is the foundation? What is the building made of? What is it for?

Making it personal...

1. Can you think of “dividing walls of hostility” we sometimes build? How does the reconciling work of Jesus challenge those?
2. What privileges do we have as members of God’s household?
3. If we take to heart verse 22, what difference would that make to our church community? Would it make a difference to what we do?

Through the week...

Verse 18 gives us a glimpse of how God the Trinity works together on our behalf. Go back over Ephesians 1 and 2 and notice the involvement of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our Christian life.

Study 6: A Mystery Revealed

Read Ephesians 3:1-21

1. What is the “mystery of Christ” Paul writes about? (v6)
2. How did Paul come to be a servant of this gospel?
3. This mystery had been hidden by God, but was now revealed. Why are we told God did that?
4. How does the church reveal the wisdom of God?
5. In verse 12, what are we reminded about our access to God?
6. How does Paul view his suffering?

7. Verses 15-19 give us another of Paul's prayers for this church. Look carefully at **what** he prays for and **why** he asks for these things.

8. In verses 20 & 21, how is God described? How is he glorified?

Making it personal...

1. How much do you appreciate the unsearchable riches of Christ (v8)?
2. Do freedom and confidence (v12) describe your approach to God? Why/why not?
3. How often do you pray for your fellow Christians the kind of things Paul prays here?
4. If we remember the God to whom we pray (v20), how will that affect our prayers?

Through the week...

Reflect on Ephesians 1:23 and Ephesians 3:19. What does it mean for a church to be filled to the fullness of God?

Study 7: Growing Up

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

1. What does Paul urge the Ephesians to do (v1)?
2. What is the basis of his appeal? Why do you think he says this?
3. What does a worthy life/walk look like?
4. List all the things that unite us as believers (v4-6). Why does keeping this unity take effort (v3)?
5. What do verses 7-10 teach us about Jesus?
(Note: verse 8 quotes Psalm 68, which is a psalm praising the Lord as a victorious, conquering king.)

6. What are the gifts of grace Jesus gives his church in verse 11?

7. Why are they given?

8. What is the goal?

9. What does maturity look like?

10. How does the image of the body help us understand how the church grows?

Making it personal...

1. Who are Jesus' gifts of grace to us in our church?

2. What is our part as God's people?

3. How will we know we are maturing?

4. What will it mean for you to be speaking the truth in love this week?

Through the week...

Read Psalm 68, and from what we have seen about Jesus in Ephesians so far, consider how it is fulfilled in him.

Study 8: Imitators of God

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:14

1. What phrases does Paul use to describe the Gentiles?
2. Why does he insist the Ephesian Christians no longer live like that?
3. How does he describe their coming to Christ?
4. What is “new” for the believer? Do you see this contrast in your own life?
5. Paul gives many examples of how the old way of living is different from the new. Use the following table to examine them.

Verses	NOT...	BUT...	BECAUSE...
4:25			
4:26			
4:28			
4:29			
4:30			
4:31			
5:3			
5:4			

6. What severe warning is given in Ephesians 5:5-7?

7. In verses 8-14 the contrast is between light and darkness. What characterizes darkness? What does the light do? What are we to do as children of light?

8. Read Ephesians 5:1-2. Discuss our motivation for this new way of living.

Making it personal...

1. How does Ephesians 4:17-19 challenge your view of unbelievers?
2. How does unresolved anger give the devil a foothold?
3. How does your speech measure up to the standards here?
4. In what areas are you tempted to be a partner with those who are disobedient?
5. What difference will it make to our community life as we seek to obey this teaching?

Through the week...

Reflect on Jesus' teaching about light in John 1:1-14; 3:16-21; 8:12.

Study 9: Spirit-filled Living

Read Ephesians 5:15-21

1. What are the three “not...but...” instructions in verses 15-18? How do the contrasts help us understand what careful living/walking looks like?

2. The instruction “be filled with the Spirit” (v20) is illustrated in the following 3 verses. What are the 5 ways given here to demonstrate our filling? *(If you have an ESV bible, look for the “ing” words in verses 19, 20 and 21)*

Paul now gives us 3 contexts for submitting. Read Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9.

3. In marriage, who submits and why?

4. In parent-child relationships, who submits and why?

5. In the workplace, who submits and why?

6. Look again at Ephesians 5:33. What else is the wife to do?

7. What are parents to be careful to do?

9. What are masters to do?

Making it personal...

1. Are you living a careful life, making the most of every opportunity in these evil days?

2. What challenges are there for wives today in seeking to obey Ephesians 5:22-33?

3. How can we all be encouraging our married sisters to submit to Christ in this?

4. What challenges are there for parents today in seeking to obey Ephesians 6:1-4?

5. How can we all be encouraging our sisters who are mothers in this?

6. What challenges are there for us in seeking to obey Ephesians 6:5-9.

7. How can we all be encouraging our working sisters and our sisters with maids in this?

Through the week...

A clearer translation of Ephesians 5:18 would be "keep on being filled by the Spirit". What does the Holy Spirit fill us with? Review Ephesians 1:23; 3:19, 4:10; 4:13; 5:1 and Colossians 1:19; 2:9,10; 3:16.

Study 10: Standing Firm

Read Ephesians 6:10-24

1. It seems clear we are in a battle! Where do we get our strength?
2. Who is the enemy?
3. What have we already learnt about Jesus and this enemy? (See *Ephesians 1:19-22*)
4. What is success for us in this battle (verse 13)?
5. What function do the various bits of armor have?
6. How does the whole armor of God help us to stand?

7. What do we learn about prayer from verse 18?

8. What prayer does Paul ask for himself?

9. Why is Paul sending Tychicus to them?

10. What is Paul's final prayer for this church?

Making it personal...

1. How aware are you that we are engaged in a spiritual battle?
2. Where are you looking for strength and protection? Is it in the armor of God and the strength of his might?
3. Does this passage challenge your prayer life?
4. Who could we be praying for using verses 19 & 20?
5. Are we those who love our Lord Jesus with love incorruptible?

Think back...

Now we've finished our studies in Ephesians, recall one thing you've been personally challenged or encouraged by, and one thing you think challenges or encourages us as a community. Share with the group and pray about these things.